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THE FULL SIGNIFICANCE
OF
1492.

BY

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1492 COLUMBUS! 1892

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THE FULL SIGNIFICANCE OF 1492.

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DURING the past few months, a great deal of interest has been excited by the deliberations, in various responsible quarters, as to what should be done to celebrate the approaching 400th anniversary of the voyage of Columbus, in 1492. Spain, anxious for a chance of once more holding up her head proudly among the nations, proposes to take the initiative in celebrating an event which carries her memory back to the time when she ruled also Germany and the Netherlands, and was the greatest power in Europe, save only her spiritual superior, the Pope.

But what have the other countries of Europe to say in the matter? The present pamphlet will attempt to present the events which led to, and followed the voyage of 1492, in all their vast significance and weighty import, as seen by English eyes, as they trace with respect and pride the growth of free institutions such as can alone make mighty nations; remembering also that the American nation has recently celebrated the Centenary of its Constitution, of which it is

the highest possible praise to say that it is able to celebrate a century of unshaken existence, and that it never had a greater prospect of celebrating, in after ages, a long series of such festivals, than it has to-day.

It is a happy coincidence that such a festival should precede the fourth centenary of the voyage of 1492. This voyage is often quoted as marking an epoch in the world's history ; and is usually spoken of as the Discovery of America. Whether this latter term is correct or not, we leave to the judgment of readers after hearing both sides of the question.

We should consider it as *prima facie* a rather suspicious circumstance, if a man should visit the only two places where exact information as to the whereabouts of a certain thing could be obtained—the more important of these visits being kept a profound secret—and should after that go straight on the road to find that very thing, and thereby obtain for himself all the glory of a new discovery, to the exclusion of the rights of daring men who, 500 years before, had acquired the knowledge he strove to obtain the reputation of having been the first to give to the world ; while at the same time this man tells all manner of untruths as to the considerations and reasonings that led him to go straight to find what he sought.

Yet these, in plain language, are the charges we bring against Columbus. He was instructed

in Rome how to go about the work that was required of him. He was sent to Iceland for further detailed information in 1477. He made up a lame tale as to his objects in going to find a western world; and he justified the most wanton acts of cruelty by the plea of necessity or of profit, and by the consoling platitudes of religion.

The visit to Iceland was most carefully concealed, and we hear nothing of it, except indirectly in letters which his son has quoted in his biography. In these letters he casually mentions (as quoted in Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus*) as follows:—"In the year 1477, in February, I navigated 100 leagues beyond Thule, the southern part of which is 73 degrees distant from the equator, and not 63, as some pretend; neither is it situated within the line which includes the west of Ptolemy, but is much more westerly. The English, principally those of Bristol, go with their merchandise to this island, which is as large as England. When I was there, the sea was not frozen, and the tides were so great as to rise and fall 26 fathoms."

The importance and bearing of some of these statements will be seen later. But here we have full proof that Columbus visited Iceland.

According to the story usually told, and which entirely ignores the visit to Iceland, we are given to understand that Columbus had made up his mind that since the earth was round (or globular)

in form, and certain places (the East Indies) could be reached by a long and intricate voyage to the East, the same places could therefore be reached by a corresponding voyage to the West—and which he would imagine to be longer or shorter, according as he had formed a greater or less estimate of the size of the terrestrial globe.

This is a definite argument, and a perfectly reasonable one, as it stands. Our present astronomical and geographical knowledge allows us to accept it without question, and without necessarily impeaching the motives with which it was put forth. In approaching these subjects we are apt to make too great allowance for the inexact state of science in those days; and to charitably imagine that Columbus regarded the world as being about half the circumference it really is; which assumption would, if correct, allow only one quarter the land and sea area our globe is now known to possess.

For the working hypothesis promulgated by Columbus to the world, was that by a certain number of days' sailing to the West, he would come again to the lands already known to exist in the far East; while in his contracts with his sailors, he proposed to sail only such a distance as we now know would bring him to a point as nearly as possible half way round the globe from where he professed to be expecting to arrive.

Was Columbus really so ignorant as all this?

Or was it a false plan set forth to hide his real knowledge, secretly and clandestinely obtained? And was his real ultimate destination *not* the East Indies, but the shores to the south of that "Good Vinland," which has been described in books he would have certain access to when in Iceland?

To answer these questions, it is necessary to consider how far the present popular notion of Columbus's "learned ignorance" is a correct one. That Columbus did not shrink from propounding false arguments when they served his turn, we shall have occasion presently to show. But as a matter of fact, Columbus had two theories before him, from which to take his choice as to the shape of the earth, and the possibility of extended navigation. He might, in the first place, adopt the orthodox monkish notion—the product of a thousand years of blindly following imaginary "authorities" on religion, and all other subjects whatever; whose word was law, and to doubt whom was to be cursed with all the anathemas so humorously set forth in the "Ingoldsby Legend" of the "Jackdaw of Rheims,"—and lately launched afresh on the devoted head of Dr. McGlynn.

This monkish notion was that the earth must needs be flat, because there was not a word in the Scriptures to show that it was round!

To such an extent was this notion carried that a map of the world, drawn about 1320, by a

monk of Hereford, England, and preserved in the cathedral of that place, actually represents a flat, circular earth; with Jerusalem in the centre, Eden at the top (the East), the Pillars of Hercules at the West, and the rest of the map diversified by fancy sketches of monkeys, bears, mermaids, hippogryphs, centaurs, and other more or less mythical monsters. So strongly rooted was this view of cosmography, that even in the life-time of Columbus, an ardent Spanish religionist spoke of the globular-earth theories as "dangerous doctrines."

To escape from these trammels of conventional ideas, Columbus must have gone back to the days of the old Greek philosophers, when the Alexandrian-Greek culture was at its height, and engaged in applying the logical and mathematical principles arranged and codified by Euclid and others, to all problems upon which mathematical science in its then state could be brought to bear; and in reducing to exact mathematical formula the practical mechanical conclusions of Archimedes in an earlier age. Here he would find records of measurements of meridians from Syene to Alexandria, and in other places, from which were deduced earth measurements slightly in excess, rather than otherwise, of those we accept to-day.

With these approximate measurements before him, based on strictly correct scientific principles, Columbus never can have believed that the num-

ber of leagues' sailing he stipulated for when arguing with his mutinous crews, whom he had all along deceived by false entries in his log-book, could have brought him to the East Indies; seeing that at that most critical juncture of his voyage, he had the whole world between himself and the Indies he pretended to be in search of!

But he fortifies his assumption by the mistaken notion of early mariners, that the countries already known comprised not less than two-thirds of the circumference of the earth, and that consequently the voyage from Cape Verde to the Indies, westward, could not be more than half the length of the voyage eastward to the same places. Yet knowing that observations of latitude are the most correct and obvious means of ascertaining the earth's diameter, he was not above inventing facts that might lend color to his false assumption, for personal and interested purposes, of the smaller size of the earth. Travel at that time was not so restricted, but that long meridians could be pretty accurately measured; and in his letter to his son about his journey to Iceland, he actually places that country ten degrees farther north than had already been correctly stated by more trustworthy authorities.

That is to say, he represents that in passing over a certain number of miles, he had traversed a greater arc; that is, a larger proportion of the earth's circumference, than was really the case

—thus giving a notion of the earth's size more in accordance with the theories he promulgated.

Unfortunately for the pretensions of this man to be regarded as a shining light of either science, religion, or even of ordinary morality, it may be noted that it is quite impossible for any sailor used to astronomical observations, to make so flagrant an error in even a single unaided eye-estimate of the height of the polar star, or of the sun at noon. The rudest scale would give him his latitude to about one degree, and hence a whole ten degrees' error cannot be other than positively and deliberately wilful, and therefore culpable in the highest degree. Had he been in any doubt, or had any wish to publish the literal bare truth, his journey from Spain to England and thence to Iceland, would have given him a sufficiently accurate measure of the size of the earth.

Another consideration showing that Columbus knew that the earth was much larger than he represented to be the case, presents itself on an examination of the great Diego Ribero map, two editions of which are preserved in the Vatican at Rome. The first map, having the original line of partition traced on it by Pope Alexander VI., when he divided the newly discovered territories in all parts of the globe between Spain and Portugal in 1494, is considered too precious to be moved. The second map, dated 1529, was exhibited at the Indian and Colonial exhibition in

London, 1886; and a photo-lithographed copy of this map was on view at the Norse exhibit in the American exhibition in London, during the summer of 1887, under the care of Miss Marie A. Brown, to whom the English-speaking race is eternally indebted for the light she has thrown on the doings and discoveries of their Viking sires.

On the score of accuracy, this map might not perhaps satisfy the geographical requirements of the modern scholar, for it only shows the east coast of America, with a portion of the west coast in the immediate neighborhood of the Isthmus of Panama. But what is more to our purpose, it shows almost correctly the proper amount of space (left, of course, blank), in which we can now, by superior knowledge, fill in the western portions of America, and the Pacific ocean with its thousands of islets.

The longitudes on this map run, in some cases, a few degrees out of strict correctness. But then it must be remembered that these mariners of old had no fine chronometers, recording logs, submarine telegraphs, and all the countless refinements of later civilization, by which the longitudes of any place can now be accurately determined.

Now it is impossible for any one to affirm that during the very short time between the first voyage of Columbus and the compilation of these maps, ideas had so enlarged with regard to

the earth's size, as to assign it twice its previously assumed diameter! Especially as it had not yet been circumnavigated. Had the theories originally propounded by Columbus to those who had not the necessary knowledge to answer them, been recognized by the science of the day as correct, the American coast must have been placed near to the longitude of Japan! Those in the council of Salamanca, who had the most capable knowledge, seem to have seen that there was nothing in his arguments as propounded, and to have suspected that he was in reality building on information of which he would not confess the sources. Yet as good servants of the church, they could not expose the man who had the countenance of Rome, and whose schemes worked so well on the cupidity of the court.

America and its islands once discovered, all need for fraud or concealment ceases, and the earth, in two short years, resumes its original dimensions, as found by the Greek philosophers, and now again shown on Diego Ribero's map. No doubt the silent philosophers of the council of Salamanca, who heard what Columbus had to say, and decided that there was no force in his falsified and perverted arguments, were learned (far more so than their fear of the inquisition would allow them to confess) in the science of the Arabians, who had kept the ancient lore from destruction, though under the ban of

Rome. To such mathematically trained intellects, the confused ideas of Columbus would appear but a Quixotic jumble of facts and fancies. They probably knew, but did not dare to urge, that if Columbus was to reach the Indies by a western route, he would have twice as long a voyage as that which seemed already so long and terrible.

That Columbus himself expected to discover new continents and islands is amply and conclusively shown by the terms of his agreement with Ferdinand and Isabella. This document is interesting as bearing upon the adventurer's ideas of the nature and importance of the discoveries he expected to make, and also as a criterion of his inordinate and insatiable ambition.

The agreement is here quoted from Arthur Helps' "Life of Columbus":

"The favors which Christopher Columbus has asked from the King and Queen of Spain in recompense of the discoveries which he has made in the ocean seas, and as recompense for the voyage which he is about to undertake, are the following:

"1. He wishes to be made Admiral of the seas and countries which he is about to discover. He desires to hold this dignity during his life, and that it should descend to his heirs.

"This request is granted by the King and Queen.

“2. Christopher Columbus wishes to be made Viceroy of all the continents and islands.

“Granted by the King and Queen.

“3. He wishes to have a share amounting to a tenth part, of the profits of all merchandise, be it pearls, jewels, or any other thing, that may be found, gained, bought, or exported from the countries which he is to discover.

“Granted by the King and Queen.

“4. He wishes in his quality of Admiral, to be made sole judge of all mercantile matters that may be the occasion of dispute in the countries which he is to discover.

“Granted by the King and Queen, on condition that this jurisdiction should belong to the office of Admiral, as held by Don Enriques and other Admirals.

“5. Christopher Columbus wishes to have the right to contribute the eighth part of the expenses of all ships which traffic with the new countries, and in return to earn the eighth part of the profits.

“Granted by the King and Queen.

“Santa Fe, in the Vega of Granada, April 17th, 1492.”

From the terms of these grants, we again arrive at the conclusion, that Columbus had in his mind something very different from what he allowed to appear on the surface. His mention of seas, continents and islands, is to say the least of it, rather remarkable for an adventurer who

was merely attempting to reach by another route waters already visited, and islands already known. His reference to continents is strange, and will be claimed by his admirers as an inspired piece of prophecy. But Columbus is not one of those characters to whom such inspirations easily come. The crafty, cruel slave-trader was not the man to go on such a voyage for pure science' sake, any more than he visited Iceland, as one of his apologists makes out, to solve problems in hydrography! What he did go to Iceland for, will presently be seen. What opinion, then, after clearing away all these clouds of mist and deception, are we to form as to the real state of Columbus's mind, when setting out upon his voyage across the western seas? That he really thought a few days' or weeks' sailing would bring him to the East Indies, we have shown that we cannot for a moment imagine. His voyage to Iceland, had it taught him nothing else, would have taught him different to this—so much so, that he had to falsify his observations of latitude a whole ten degrees, as he had falsified his magnetic observations at the Azores, and as he afterward falsified his log, and duped the islanders into going on board his ship to be sold as slaves.

The real state of the case can easily be explained. Rome, always on the lookout for new lands to proselytize, became aware at the end of the tenth century, that new lands lying to the

southward of Greenland, and stretching far down in warmer latitudes, had been discovered by Icelandic navigators. Gudrid, the wife of one of the early colonists of the new country (Thorfinn Karlsefne), who had heard of it from the first explorer, Leif, son of Erik the Red—had herself made a pilgrimage to Rome, and there received great attention while describing the new countries. Priests and bishops from the large and flourishing settlements of Greenland, which contained a cathedral, three or four monasteries, and fifteen churches, had visited the new country of Vinland, from the time of its discovery until 1347.

For some reason, probably the passing of Iceland and its colonies from a republican to a monarchical form of government, on their annexation to Norway (1262), and later to Denmark—together with the soporific influences of Romanism—these countries became neglected, and we are left in doubt as to the ultimate fate of their colonists.

But traces of the Icelandic influences still remain in New England, the site of the ancient Vinland. There the descendants of one of the great Indian tribes still retain, handed down with scrupulous fidelity and wonderful correctness, a mass of the old legends of the Eddas, the mythology of northern Europe. There, though under other names, are Odin and Thor in all their grandeur, there are the apish tricks of the mischief-loving Loki.

That these are not distinctively Indian legends, is proved by their local survival only. They are completely different, too, in form and character from the Hiawatha-legends of the Ojibways; while the personal attributes of the *dramatis personæ* are Norse, not Indian. (See "The Algonquin Legends of New England," by Chas. G. Leland.)

This complete correspondence of a vast mass of Indian legends with the Eddas, leads one to infer at the very least a long continued friendly intercourse, if not actual fusion of race, between the Icelandic settlers and the Indian natives.

These early discoveries being well known at Rome, the time had now arrived for making use of them. The power of the church was now, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, in the descendent in Europe. The northern countries had never been very steadfast in their allegiance to Rome, and successive sects of heretics, rising at various times and in various parts of Europe, foreshadowed the final great blow struck at the prestige of Rome by Luther and his contemporaries. Already was beginning to be felt that need of strenuous effort for self-defense, which culminated in the next century, in the founding of the Society of Jesus, whose ramifications soon penetrated every land, and still embrace the whole known globe within the subtle, yet powerful arms of missionaries, teachers, and diploma-

tists, making the power of Rome more felt and feared to-day than ever in history.

Yet in the early middle ages, the power of the church was paramount within the limited area of Christendom. The proudest moment for the pontifical sovereignty was when Pope Hildebrand placed his foot upon the neck of the prostrate Barbarossa in front of St. Mark's at Venice. Through a series of centuries, the armies of Europe had been launched against the infidels of Palestine as though under the personal command of the Vicar of Christ.

But times were changing. The nations were already beginning to arouse themselves from the sleep of ages. The waning prestige of the church must be kept up, if not in the old world, in another which it should be her everlasting glory to discover.

The path to new lands must be found, and once discovered, they must be held for mother church and for the advancement of her own prestige, by the care of her most subservient vassal.

Among the records of former ecclesiastical dominion preserved in the Vatican, where they still exist, were found those relating to the lost colony of Vinland. Its formation had been duly recorded by Adam of Bremen (1002), who had the story from the lips of a nephew of King Sweyn; and more recently in the Saga of Thorfinn Karlsefne, preserved in writing in a very

beautiful manuscript, the Book of Flatoe, which at the time of Columbus's visit was still in Iceland, and is now preserved in the royal library at Copenhagen.

There was no doubt as to where the country lay ; the route to it from Iceland was well known, and its situation was indicated on a chart in one of the Sagas and further described as follows :

“ On the west of the great sea of Spain, which some call Ginnunga-gap, and leaning somewhat toward the north, the first land which occurs is the Good Vinland.”

The name of Ginnunga-gap is significant. It means the yawning gulf, or abyss, or chaos—the primeval entity from which all nature was evolved. It gives us a point of touch with the ancient notion, current among the sailors of Columbus, that there was nothing beyond that sea—that it was the boundary of the earth.

The discovery of Vinland had superseded that idea, though “ some ” still called the ocean by that name. Still it had no such terrors for the Viking as it had for the poor frightened sailors of 500 years later, who were in hourly dread of tumbling off the edge of the earth into a bottomless abyss ! This was not the Norseman's way of thinking. As long as he could see the sea before him, wave after wave in endless succession, he knew he was in no greater danger than he had already passed through ; indeed he was safer in the open sea than near a rock-bound

coast; while the more danger, the greater the glory, and the more sagas to be made by skalds in his honor.

No such feelings inspired the Christian sailor. True, poets and philosophers had imagined a land beyond that sea. The idea was tempting to the poetic and philosophic mind. But it was not Plato's Atlantis; it was not Aristotle's Antilla that Columbus was setting forth to discover, but a more material prey for the cupidity of the church and the avarice of princes.

The existence of such a former colony on the other side of this terrible ocean being thus known to the church by existing records, it became necessary, for the furtherance of their plans, to find a man of determination and perseverance, ambitious and not too scrupulous, but with a certain amount of intelligence, and able to put on a show of religious enthusiasm, who should get together money and ships and men, and force them, in spite of their fears, to cross the trackless ocean. The man who could carry out this scheme, should be helped as far as the religious power could safely assert itself. He should be told where to go for advice, knowledge, and assistance of all kinds. He should be provided with admittance to the closets of priests and bishops, and to the audience-chambers of royalty.

The State that should furnish what was wanted, should be master of the new lands of

half the globe, and free to enslave and torture and kill, under pretence of christianizing, the native inhabitants and rightful owners of the new countries.

Such a man was found in Christopher Columbus, a practiced slave trader—a sort of Zebehr Pacha of his time—and such a State was found in Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella.

But, an excuse was needed for crossing that great sea; and the difficulty of reaching the Indies by the circuitous and hazardous voyage round the Cape, was made the stalking-horse of the new project. The doctrine of the rotundity of the earth had only a few years before been pronounced by a learned Spanish divine to be dangerous and pernicious. But this dangerous doctrine suddenly finds favor at court, and all men are required to believe in a globular earth, with that charming versatility of faith required by the church, but only to be attained by those to whom the immutable first principles of science are unknown, their teaching being proscribed and punished with death at the stake, by which means experimental and inductive science had been buried for a thousand years under the night of so-called religion.

The Arabs and Moors, it is true, had kept alight the torch of learning in Spain and Africa; and the Greeks of the Eastern Empire still retained the memories of their past achievements, which, after the fall of Constantinople, were

spread over Europe by wandering Estradiots. But Moors and Greeks alike were under the ban of the church. The ancient learning was persecuted under the name of magic and superstition, and the flame of science was flickering, all but extinguished. *Now*, by an irony of fate, the torch of science burns nowhere brighter than in those lands that were intended to be once more brought under the fetters of ignorant and corrupt superstition, masquerading in the sacred name of Truth!

The depth and power of such ignorance can best be seen when it is remembered that a few years afterwards, in Germany, a student who had discovered a Greek Testament in the library of his university had to dig and delve for the meaning of the language, just as modern explorers have to puzzle out cuneiform inscriptions or the still imperfectly deciphered hieroglyphics of Hamath. And the word went round that the Protestants had "invented a new language, which they call Greek!" So low had sunk the study of antique lore!

But before Columbus could proceed with the preparations for his voyage, he must first be coached in his part. The Book of Flatoe must be examined, and all further local information obtained that was possible, on the spot.

The only mention of this visit to Iceland by Columbus himself has been already given at the beginning of this pamphlet. What he really

saw and did there may be guessed from the following quotation from the learned Icelandic, Finn Magnussen :

“ In the year 1477 Magnus Eiolfson was bishop of Skalholt in Iceland ; since 1470 he had been abbot of the monastery of Helgafell, the place where the oldest documents relating to Greenland, Vinland, and the various parts of America discovered by the Northmen had been written, and where they were doubtless carefully preserved, as it was from this very district that the most distinguished voyagers had gone forth. These documents must have been well known to Bishop Magnus, as were their general contents throughout the island, and it is therefore in the highest degree improbable that Columbus, whose mind had been filled with the idea of exploring a western continent since the year 1474, should have omitted to seek for and receive information respecting these early voyages. He arrived at Hvalfiord, on the south coast of Iceland, at a time when that harbor was most frequented, and it is well known that Bishop Magnus visited the neighboring churches in the spring or summer.”

Even had he come to Iceland for any other purpose, Columbus was so ardent an-enquirer after other people's writings and opinions that he is not likely to have neglected these chances ; for he was much more apt at quoting the ideas of others than at taking accurate observations himself and deducing correct conclusions there-

from, as witness his false magnetic observations at the Azores, leading him to propound the remarkable theory of a *pear-shaped earth*, the protuberance being westward, *i. e.*, towards the parts not yet explored.

From the above quoted records he would learn how the Vinland, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland coasts were sighted by Bjarni Herjulfson in 983, after which Leif and Thorwald, sons of Jarl Erik the Red, the colonizer of Greenland, made an exploration of the coasts and country near the present site of Boston, Mass., and wintered there. Later still, Thorfinn Karlsefne, with his wife Gudrid, founded a permanent colony there, and their son Snorre was born in Vinland. After Thorfinn's death and Snorre's marriage, Gudrid went to Rome, where she was well received, and her accounts of the new countries beyond seas were listened to with attention by the holy fathers, since every discovery offered an enlargement of the papal domain, and furnished a new field for the preaching of the gospel.

Gudrid afterwards returned to her son's house at Glaumbæ, and there she had a church built, and passed the rest of her life as a religious recluse.

Of course, to a system that could change the form of the earth from flat to globular at will, and then treat as mere matter of detail any discrepancies as to its size, it was easy to suppress

the records of Icelandic discovery. Hence, everywhere imposture reigned supreme and unchallenged.

Armed with all necessary information and authority, Columbus rapidly made his way to the confidences, first of Juan Perez, late confessor to Queen Isabella, then to the Grand Cardinal, who procured him an audience with the Queen; then he enlisted the services of Louis de St. Angel, who finally prevailed with the Queen, by an eloquent appeal to her ambition for the extension of her own power and dominion, and to her jealousy of other nations who might seize the chance and profit by it; while affecting, at the same time, a solicitude for the glory of God and the exaltation of the church.

These preliminary difficulties overcome, Columbus at last set sail for the new world, hoping to strike some part of the coast that was known to stretch southward, and had even been explored as far as Florida, while some conjectured that it came near the coast of Africa. The exact island at which he first touched is uncertain, but it was one of the Bahamas, probably either the present San Salvador or the one now called Cat Island.

The sequel of the voyage of this ambassador of ignorance, greed, and fraud is well known. Great conquests were made; confiding natives were massacred or entrapped on board ship to be deported to distant lands as slaves, while their countries were rifled of everything of value they

contained. Ancient civilizations were ruthlessly destroyed and the greatest barbarities committed in the name of religion. Let Mexico and Peru tell the story !

But far to northward a little cloud was rising and growing that was eventually, in a few short years, to obscure the fair horizon of Spain.

A nation of mariners, descendants of the Vikings, and inheriting all their intense love of freedom and adventure, both by land and more especially on the sea, swooped down in their tiny barks on the huge Spanish galleons bearing the treasures of Montezuma and the Incas. They burnt the Spaniards' treasure-ships in their own finest harbor, and laughed as they told how they had "singd the king of Spain's beard." These daring sea-rovers had early thrown off their allegiance to Rome, although one of their kings had received the title of defender of its faith, and their late queen had been the wife of a Spanish king, who had hoped to succeed to her throne. But her sister and successor now reigned over them, under whom there was not the slightest chance of Spanish or papal influence being tolerated in their country, which was consequently to be regarded as lost to Spain and the church. But such a loss was not to be borne without a struggle, and an immense Armada was despatched to coerce this country into obedience. But the forces of nature and the pluck of the English seamen were too much for the unwieldy

strength of the Spanish Armada, and the huge fleet was driven round the isles, scattered and wrecked upon the rocky shores. Had that Armada succeeded in its object, the clock of progress, that had just struck the hours of dawn, would have been rudely put back into middle night.

And what would then have been the fate of the infant America? Already brave and honest men had begun to cross the seas, not to harry and destroy, but to colonize and create, and soon a New England arose on the site of the Good Vinland of old, and destined to leave a more permanent and powerful mark on the world's history. Had the Armada succeeded, all this would have been lost. The brute force of Spain would have grasped the whole of the New World, and held it under the domination of the Pope. For nothing less than this was the true end and aim of Columbus's voyage in 1492, which America is to celebrate with rejoicing some two years hence.

The effect on Spain herself of all these conquests, as seen by the light of after ages, is deeply instructive, and may form a terrible warning to all futurity.

The teeming wealth poured in by fleets of galleons, filtered down from high to low, from rich to poor, and turned men's minds away from the cultivation of a fertile country, to fancied El Dorados beyond seas. Slow but sure sources of

competency or of wealth were given up for the possibilities of sudden riches, and the whole nation exemplified the proverb, "Lightly come, lightly go." A false pride raised the nation above all honest work, while the gold and silver continued to pour in from the American mines; and lands once eminently fertile, fell out of cultivation. An intolerent religion drove away honest and hard-working artisans who dared to live according to their own convictions: while gilded idleness in high places completed the ruin by the most deplorable misgovernment. The busy hive of workers in Holland soon threw off the Spanish yoke; one by one other dependencies followed suit, until, at this hour, two large islands and a few very small ones, are all that Spain has to show in the West Indies as the remnants of an empire upon which it could at one time be said that the sun never set.

Fifteen republics on the mainland, and two more on an island, have arisen out of the ruins of that empire; besides which, many islands, especially the very ones most associated with Columbus himself, have passed into the possession of other powers. The island first sighted by Columbus is now British territory. His principal early discovery, San Domingo, is hopelessly divided by the strife of factions.—"*Sic transit gloria mundi.*"

Other portions of the Spanish dominions have joined themselves to a greater republic than any

of those before alluded to, and are now enjoying a wonderful prosperity they could never have attained, or would have been many decades in reaching, under less happy auspices.

And what do we see now? After four centuries of struggle, truth and freedom are triumphant. May they ever be so! America can brook no master, be he king or priest. Insidious enemies may think to steal in under cover of a simulated patriotism. But America is waking. She is becoming alive to the nobility and dignity of her Viking ancestors, and that dignity she is preparing to assert before all the world. As a beginning, she has erected at Boston a statue of Leif Erikson, the first to land on the new shores. Not perhaps a good likeness of the man, if we may judge from the pictures in Icelandic manuscripts of Erik the Red, his father, but still a tribute to the Genius of Discovery, and a step in the right direction.

May it be followed by the total disownment of Columbus, and his unmasking as a cheating, scheming, grasping, mountebank slave dealer, without a particle of genuine Christianity in him, as we commonly apply that term to-day.

Where Columbus went, the Romish church claims to follow: and America is already marked out for a prey to priestly domination.

Let the United States take a lesson from those other Republics, which, before they gained their freedom, were wrapped in the swaddling clothes

of Romanism, but have now asserted their independence alike of priest and king, and placed the Jesuit under strict limitations and control.

Yet in this coming celebration the church already sees a chance of further aggression : Already Spain is preparing to take time by the forelock, and assert her pretension to empire by right of discovery. Are Americans prepared to bend their necks before a slavery ten times more odious than that which some few years ago they nobly and right manfully stamped out among themselves ?

George Washington's " little hatchet " was big enough and strong enough to cut the chains which kingcraft had forged around his country, and Englishmen honor him now as one of the noblest of their race. May his axe be ever as ready to sever the slave-links wherever they are riveted, and may the independence and the rights of man be declared all over the earth ! Who will not answer, Amen !

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Ericksson vs. Columbus.

Brown. The Icelandic Discoverers of America. By Marie A. Brown. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, 75c.

“Modern historians are pretty generally agreed that America was actually first made known to the eastern world by the indefatigable Norsemen. Yet in spite of this fact, Columbus has been, and still continues to be, revered as the one man to whose genius and courage the discovery of the New World is due. Miss Brown justly says it should be altogether foreign to American institutions and ideas of liberty and honor to countenance longer the worship of a false idol. The author first proceeds to set forth the evidence upon which the claims of the Norsemen rest. The author charges that the heads of the Roman Catholic Church were early cognizant of this discovery of the Norsemen, but that they suppressed this information. The motives for this concealment are charged to their well-known reluctance to allow any credit to non-Catholic believers, under which head at that time the Norsemen were included. They preferred that the new world should first be made known to southern Europe by adherents to the Roman Catholic faith. Most damaging evidence against Columbus's having originated, unaided, the idea of a western world or route to India is furnished by the fact that he visited Iceland in person in the spring of 1477, when he must have heard rumors of the early voyages. He is known to have visited the harbor at Hvalfjörð, on the south coast of Iceland, at a time when that harbor was most frequented, and also at the same time when Bishop Magnus is known to have been there. They must have met, and as they had means of communicating through the Latin language, would naturally have spoken of these distant countries. We have no hint of the object of this visit of Columbus, for he scrupulously avoids subsequent mention of it; but the author pleases to consider it as a secret mission instigated by the Church for the purpose of obtaining all available information concerning the Norse discoveries. Certain it is that soon after his return to Spain we find him petitioning the King and Queen for a grant of ships and men to further the enterprise; and he was willing to wait for more than fourteen years before he obtained them. His extravagant demands of the King and Queen concerning the rights, titles, and percentage of all derived from the countries ‘he was about to discover’ can hardly be viewed in any other light than that of positive knowledge concerning their existence. The closing chapters of the book are devoted to a comparison between Iceland and Spain—their customs, institutions, and learning—and between the brave Norsemen, who fearlessly sailed out into the unknown ocean in search of adventure, and the cowardly Spanish crew, procured with difficulty and constantly mutinous, who accompanied Columbus. This work is powerfully written, and it cannot fail to impress whoever reads it.”—*Public Opinion*. Washington.

A True Hero vs. A False Idol.

Brown. The Icelandic Discoverers of America. By Marie A. Brown. 12mo, cloth, illustrated, 75c.

"This book has for its end the establishment of the thesis that Columbus stole his knowledge of the new world from Iceland; that the knowledge of this new world, originally discovered by Icelanders, had been kept secret by Rome, that Columbus should be made a saint; he being a liar, a slave-dealer, and a thief; that the truthful North is the natural antagonist of the lying South, and that we all suffer by neglect of Northern history and literature."—*The Academy*, London.

"In order to balk the efforts of the Romish Church to control the politics of our Republic, it is necessary to deprive the same of one of its means, namely, a national recognition of Columbus as the discoverer of this continent, and instead to restore the stolen honor to those who have the full right to it, namely, the Scandinavians."—*Scandinavia*, Worcester, Mass.

"I have read it carefully, and heartily endorse its statements and spirit. I am amazed at the amount of proof you have accumulated in support of the claims of the Norsemen's discoveries, which, it seems to me, no sane Protestant nor impartial Catholic can controvert. I think you deserve a laurel crown for your exhaustive work."—**DR. SAMUEL KNEELAND**, Boston.

"A work which, attractive in itself, and commendable for the study and persevering research devoted to it, will be read with much interest, more especially by Americans, in view of the approaching fourth centenary of Columbus' discovery of America."—*Am. Register*, Paris.

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"Lovers of poetry in America are indebted to Miss Marie A. Brown for an introduction to a new and true singer—the Finnish poet Runeberg—through the medium of her spirited version of 'Nadeschda,' a romantic poem so beautiful that those who read it will crave a better acquaintance with its gifted and comparatively unknown author. The features of this poem are drawn from the social, serf, and court life of Russia as they existed in the time of the great Catherine, and from natural objects peculiar to the scenery and rural sights of the provinces bordering on the sources of the Volga and the Oka. Its plot, as is often the case with poems of a high order, is singularly free from complexity, and, indeed, is simple almost to severity. Its filling in and coloring, however, are unusually elaborate and effective. . . . The actors in the poem are few but striking, its situations are affluent of tenderness, pathos and dignity, and it abounds in picturesque descriptions relieved by delicate shadings. Its language is severely simple, yet elegant and expressive ; and the verse, though shorn of the pleasing accessory of rhyme, is graceful and melodious. To one accustomed to the elaborate harmonies of our modern English poets, the melody of this Swedish singer comes like the strange sweet music of some new world, freighted, indeed, with human feeling, but human feeling clad in virgin tones suggestive of the dewy rime of poetry's early morning."—*Harper's Magazine*.

NADESCHDA.

Runeberg. Nadeschda ; A Romantic Poem. By Johan Ludwig Runeberg. Translated from the Swedish by Mrs. John B. Shipley (Marie A. Brown) 12mo, cloth, 50c.

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